

## 2 : GOD ?

MANY "ARGUMENTS" OFFERED to prove that GOD EXISTS :

WATCHMAKER -The astonishing coherence of the universe  
implies DESIGN  
which implies A DESIGNER.

FIRST CAUSE - Everything is caused by something  
implies EITHER an infinite number of things  
OR first cause which causes itself.

ONTOLOGICAL - Of all things, there must be some greatest conceivable thing  
which is GOD.

Are there any "ARGUMENTS" which prove that GOD DOESN'T EXIST ?

"We can explain the universe without assuming God" - proves nothing.

It can't be done - because one could always suppose that there was a God who had no discernible effect on  
anything that we can observe.

( Recall that you have to make more assumptions before you have anything  
you can test. )

So far as I know, there are NO CONCLUSIVE ARGUMENTS, and NO UNAMBIGUOUS EVIDENCE.

But that does say something about God :

If He does exist, then He doesn't force Himself upon us.

Observation can tell us something ( usually negative ) about God - we can sometimes rule out some  
hypotheses about God.

It seems fairly likely that God is not a gent. in a nightshirt who lives in a cloud.

It is almost certain that God is not a purple giraffe tethered to the Albert Park fountain.

Should we worry that there are NO CONCLUSIVE ARGUMENTS ?

No. We have no conclusive arguments for anything else either.

COGITO ERGO SUM ?  
- even that goes a bit too far.

Even if we accept that the evidence of our senses is reliable ( and you can't PROVE that either ), we've no  
conclusive evidence for - say - ATOMS.

For reasons of our own ( Democritus wasn't a chemist )  
we ASSUME that atoms exist, and that they have certain properties -  
then we can work out that things would behave as we observe -  
but that only shows that there MIGHT be atoms;  
the real mechanism could be quite different, provided only that it gave the same behaviour.

Most of us nevertheless believe in atoms.

CAN WE GET THE SAME SORT OF "EVIDENCE FOR" GOD ?

Like this :

For reasons of our own  
we ASSUME that God exists, and has certain properties -  
then we can work out the consequences.

If the consequences match the world we know, then we can continue with our assumption.

That only shows that there MIGHT be God;  
the real mechanism could be quite different, provided only that it gave the same behaviour.

If the consequences DON'T match the world we know, then we must reject our assumption. ( Compare old gent. on a cloud. ) But we've learnt something, and can always make another assumption.

WHAT SORT OF PROPERTIES MIGHT WE ASSUME FOR GOD ? -

here's a selection, all tried some time :

Source of values. Good or bad ?  
Creator ? Controller ? Warlord ? Remote ? Servant ? Lover ?  
Pantheon ? Pantheism ?  
Duality. Satan ?

The different hypotheses -  
usually fairly complex sets of hypotheses, which isn't very satisfactory from a logical point of view - lead us to different RELIGIONS.

We're going to talk about

CHRISTIANITY

( because it's the only one I know. And I know that it works. )